
ENIGMA
VARIATIONS
Nathaniel S.
Rounds

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Enigma Variations: Beggar-Tick Socks it to a Cricket Frog

"The piano ain't got no wrong notes."
--Thelonious Monk

The other day at the Kiev Café / I spied Diego Rodríguez de Silva y Velázquez, Jr. / noonday counter tenor and painter of modern anxieties /our eyes locked completely / In his eyes I caught / grieved bees dreaming / That night I dreamed while sleep-walking through the East Village /and fished shoes from a disgraced horse's mouth / I paddled down an alley in the one good shoe / toward the Great pacific garbage patch / and then died from cobalt in a heavy heart /with Velázquez, Jr. / sticking to me like a tick on a frog

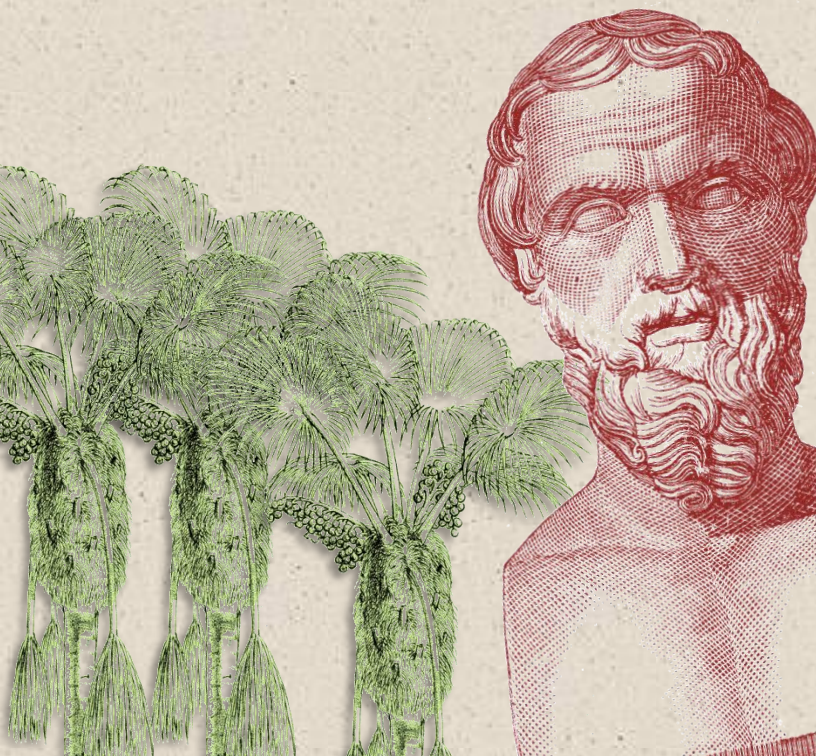


Reason Not, Sanguine Poet

When you place wheat husks and dirty undies on a table there shall emerge traveling historians who wander along Tarpon Springs, picking the minds of old GIs and reciting old tales in exchange for gyros and coffee. When the historians fail to return to your table, you should create a television program that employs despair as its MacGuffin.

Sprinkle pennies on the floor randomly while asking complicated trivia about Canadian tax law. Then cut to the audience--old dolls staring—and toss burning gummies at the dolls while barking "your mother and I discussed this."

When you are evicted from your house due to failure to abide by retirement village regulations, paint your fleeting memories on repossessed Cadillacs and give nightly tours of your former digs to snowbirds, using a megaphone and searchlight.



Triple Pretzel Peril

Dedicated to Stanisław Dominik Zdunowski, who provided the fast food napkin with a scrawled adumbration:
This dull phonograph needle drops / between two evenings while the sky bleeds /on an ill-tempered cricket

幺.

The 4’ 9” gentleman named Cricket enters the café at the insistence of two hired mourners. His full name with titles, decorations, and honorary appointments: Stalwart Cricket of the Harmonious Dawn / Sagacious Fourth Servant of the Sky/Paradise Stealing Assassin.

Cricket sleeps with a towel over one arm on top of a table in the Jade Duck Café. It’s been closed for two years. Cricket subsists on chickens

abandoned by disillusioned hipsters. The original owners of the café, Stanley and Ursula, decided to retire after forty-six years.

You should live in the Jade Duck Café. We can hang out at the bar. In my mind, your exhibit lingers, like a traveling road show, the found and fragile offerings of time floating to the surface like unrelenting questions.

兩.

Stalwart Cricket of the Harmonious Dawn / Graffiti Artist, Silhouette Pragmatist. He opens wounds with lemon juice, baking soda, and aloe vera shaving gel. He, meaning the artist, evokes the spirit of an over-priced handbag housing French fries from McDonald's. Turning his stride into a

graceful bolero, he verifies his own credit card by swiping the magnetic strip in his mouth.

仨.

Stalwart Cricket of the Harmonious Dawn / Quicksilver Nail Prince / Exalted Parking Lot Attendant. Cricket Breaks down in a behind-the-back tornado with a clap which pulverises the world's moral epicenter.

Cricket throws pennies on the floor in a baseless attempt at racial profiling. His claims of a miraculous birth to a chicken-fried dietician stem from fevered dreams as a child. Additionally, Cricket has a birthmark that resembles North Dakota. Drilling for oil while lying on the floor of the Jade Duck Café, he discovers his

reflection. The 1' x 1' asphalt tiles have just enough wax to bare a faint resemblance to The Zhengde Emperor. Cricket got his smile from a department store model; his laughter from an accident in a taco fight.



Glinted Gem Madman

For Toma Svetomir

Sitting under my desk, acid reflux got the better of me. Bureaucratic diarrhea melted my face off, became mouldering fistulas. Inside my heart's chambers: religious debate about neck tie dimensions. My immediate supervisor's vinyl shoes appeared at the entrance to my cubicle, pocked brogues glimmering with baby oil. "When you are ready," he said in a flat voice. He x-rayed my right hand, and then smashed the fingers with a brick. He checked my blood pressure with a cuff tightened beyond reason. I bit him and darted out like a broken rat.

Broached Keyway

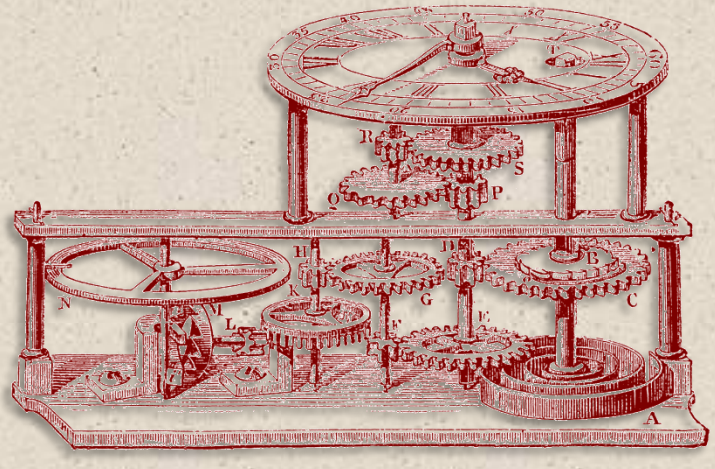
Dedicated to the memory of Amits "Downshift" Matia

Poor Edwin Fellows, gear shaper and pocket analyst. He inspects a black and white photograph of his younger self with a younger Katherine, both posing without a smile, as if the camera could, if so inclined, steal your soul and your money, the white- bordered snapshot held awkwardly with gear hobs for hands.

I didn't mean to bring Edwin down/He was staring at me for an hour

Poised with a look that could only be described as uncomplainingly weathering irritable bowel syndrome, Edwin scrutinizes the

photograph with eyes like laser diodes.
His wife Katherine stands in the bedroom doorway, staring through her husband, one pupil knocking the other like balls in Newton's cradle, their aerobatics kept in check by cat's eye glasses, small mouth primed to announce lunchtime.



Shmeat Dreams

I had some dreams
They were injected/they weren't
Mine
They didn't share the same
DNA
They didn't speak the same
Language
They didn't have the same
Birthmother
They were injected by
Committee
Like a formalist manifesto in
Lieu of love
Some say they were indicative
Of inward confessions
Like a purification from above
But even sparrows have songs
And these dreams couldn't sing
To save their souls

Time to squeeze the chipmunks/Warning: May Contain Nuts

Loco Mindcore Duality: Samizdat Thesis

With apologies to the other NSR, and thanks to our own TER

This work is part of a project which aims to describe algebraic structures on the chains and cochains of closed eyefolds that characterize those eyefolds up to astigmatism. One knows from the rational squinting theory of Gilbert and Sullivan, and from the more recent work of Howie Mandell, that the squint type of a simply squeezed

eye fold is determined by amusing structure on the cochains of the comedic space. There is an informational gap, however, between the type of a squinting eyefold and its pain-induced type, as there are non-amusing eyefolds which have the same eyefold type. Only YOU can properly type threads of ideas on a piece of glass through mittens while walking to the next bus stop.

His Excellency on the Sky sees all.

Old

I took all the old jokes and
Excuses
I wrapped them up in
Yesterday's newspaper
And stuck them in the kitchen
Stove
It was good to let them go
They turned to ashes with the
Bad news
Their stink lingered but was
Soon forgotten
And the sun dominated the
Morning
It held my attention
Leading me out of flights of
Dust
Dirty dishes and cold floors
And out where the grass was
Green, green, growing,
Triumphant

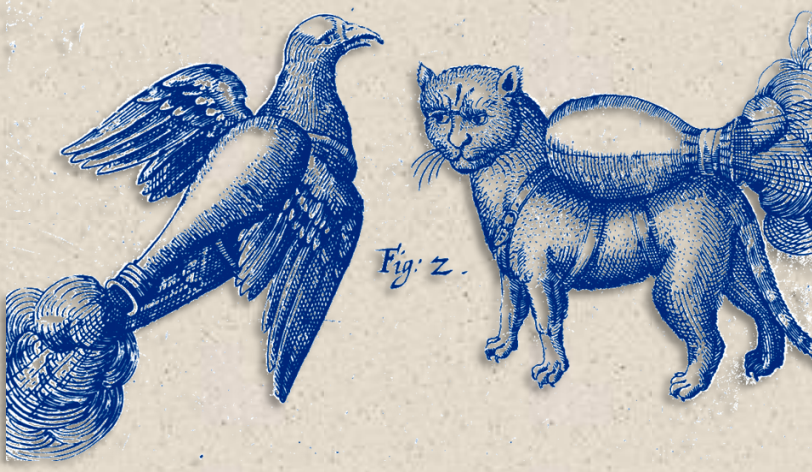


Fig. 2.



Nathaniel S. Rounds is not an American-Canadian Social Surrealist.

PRAISE (OR SOMETHING LIKE IT)
FOR ***ENIGMA VARIATIONS:***

I couldn't have said it better. Whatever it was.

--BILL Griffith, Creator of *Zippy*

